

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Withdrawn) A skin aging-preventing or improving agent which comprises a substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase.

2. (Withdrawn) A skin aging-preventing or improving agent which comprises a substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase.

3. (Withdrawn) The skin aging-preventing or improving agent according to claim 1, wherein the substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase is a plant selected from the group consisting of *Althaeaofficinalis*, *Curcuma longa*, *Actinidia chinensis*, *Gentiana lutea*, *Crataeguscuneata*, *Rehmannia glutinosa*, *Syzygium aromaticum*, *Calendula officinalis*, *Rose canina*, *Petroselinium sativum*, *Hamamelisvirginiana*, *Asiasarum sieboldii*, *Thymus serpyllum*, *Hypericum perforatum*, *Sophora flavescens*, *Cnidium officinale*, *Zizyphus jujuba*, *Citrus unshiu*, *Angelica acutiloba*, *Fucusvesiculosus*, *Tilia platyllos*, *Humulus lupulus*, *Citruslimon*, *Cassia obatusifolia*, *Magnolia obovata*, *Evodia rutaecarpa*, *Schisandrachinensis*, *Cornus officinalis*, *Atractylodes japonica*, *Digeneasimplex*, and mixtures thereof; or an extract thereof.

4. (Currently Amended) A method for ~~preventing~~ treating aging of the skin or improving the skin, comprising:

contacting skin with an skin aging-preventing or improving agent thereby increasing an expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase in the skin;

wherein said agent comprises of a substance capable of increasing an expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase;

wherein said substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase is a plant, a part of a plant, an extract of a plant, ~~and~~ an extract of a part of a plant or a combination thereof, each plant being independently selected from the group consisting of *Althaeaofficinalis*, *Curcuma longa*, *Actinidia chinensis*, *Gentiana lutea*, *Crataeguscuneata*, *Rehmannia glutinosa*, *Syzygium aromaticum*, *Calendula officinalis*, *Rose canina*, *Petroselinium sativum*, *Hamamelisvirginiana*, *Asiasarum sieboldii*, *Thymus serpyllum*, *Hypericum perforatum*, *Sophora flavescens*, *Cnidium officinale*, *Zizyphus jujuba*, *Citrus unshiu*, *Angelica acutiloba*, *Fucusvesiculosus*, *Tilia platyllos*, *Humulus lupulus*, *Citruslimon*, *Cassia obatusifolia*, *Magnolia obovata*, *Evodia rutaecarpa*, *Cornus officinalis*, *Atractylodes japonica*, *Digeneasimplex*, and mixtures thereof;

wherein, if said substance is a plant ~~is present~~, an amount of said plant as reduced to dry weight is 0.00001 to 5 wt.% based on the total amount of said agent; and

wherein, if said substance is an extract of said plant ~~is present~~, an amount of said extract of said plant as reduced to solid content is 0.00001 to 5 wt.% based on the total amount of said agent.

5. (Withdrawn) A method for screening skin wrinkling- and sagging-improving agents, which method comprises incubating skin fibroblasts with a test substance, and measuring the amount of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase expressed in the fibroblasts.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein said agent is applied to said skin in an amount of from 0.01 to 10 mg/cm².

7. (Canceled)

8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein said substance comprises a part of said plant.

9. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 4, wherein said substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase is a plant part selected from the group consisting of root, rhizome, or leaf for *Althaeaofficinalis*; rhizome for *Curcuma longa*; fruit for *Actinidia chinensis*; root or rhizome for *Gentiana lutea*; fruit for *Crataeguscuneata*; root for *Rehmannia glutinosa*; bud for *Syzygium aromaticum*; head flower for *Calendula officinalis*; fruit for *Rose canina*; leaf for *Petroselinium sativum*; leaf or bark for *Hamamelisvirginiana*; root or rhizome for *Asiasarum sieboldii*; aerial part for *Thymus serpyllum*; aerial part for *Hypericum perforatum*; root for *Sophora flavescens*; rhizome for *Cnidium officinale*; fruit for *Zizyphus jujuba*; fruit skin for *Citrus unshiu*; root for *Angelica acutiloba*; whole plant for *Fucusvesiculosus*; flower or leaf for *Tilia platyllos*; female inflorescence for *Humulus lupulus*; fruit for *Citruslimon*; and the parts described in Japanese Pharmacopoeia for *Cassia obatusifolia*, *Magnolia obovata*, *Evodia rutaecarpa*, ~~*Sehisanrachinensis*~~, *Cornus officinalis*, *Atractylodes japonica*, and *Digeneasimplex*.

10. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein said agent is in the form of a cream, an ointment, a gel, a lotion, a solution, a pack, or a foundation.

11. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein said substance is a plant.

12. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein said substance is an extract of a plant.

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein said substance is a part of a plant.

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein said substance is an extract of a part of a plant.

15. (New) A method for treating aging of the skin or improving the skin, comprising: contacting skin with an skin aging-preventing or improving agent thereby increasing an expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase in the skin;

wherein said agent comprises of a substance capable of increasing an expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase;

wherein said substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase is a plant part selected from the group consisting of root, rhizome, or leaf for *Althaeaofficinalis*; rhizome for *Curcuma longa*; fruit for *Actinidia chinensis*; root or rhizome for *Gentiana lutea*; fruit for *Crataeguscuneata*; root for *Rehmannia glutinosa*; bud for *Syzygium aromaticum*; head flower for *Calendula officinalis*; fruit for *Rose canina*; leaf for *Petroselinium sativum*; leaf or bark for *Hamamelisvirginiana*; root or rhizome for *Asiasarum sieboldii*; aerial part for *Thymus serpyllum*; aerial part for *Hypericum perforatum*; root for *Sophora flavescens*; rhizome for *Cnidium officinale*; fruit for *Zizyphus jujuba*; fruit

Application No.: 10/791,753

Reply to Office Action Dated: November 23, 2005

skin for *Citrus unshiu*; root for *Angelica acutiloba*; whole plant for *Fucusvesiculosus*; flower or leaf for *Tilia platyllos*; female inflorescence for *Humulus lupulus*; fruit for *Citruslimon*; and the parts described in Japanese Pharmacopoeia for *Cassia obatusifolia*, *Magnolia obovata*, *Evodia rutaecarpa*, *Cornus officinalis*, *Atractylodes japonica*, and *Digeneasimplex*;

wherein an amount of said plant part as reduced to dry weight is 0.00001 to 5 wt.% based on the total amount of said agent.

16. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein said agent is applied to said skin in an amount of from 0.01 to 10 mg/cm².

17. (New) The method according to claim 4, wherein said agent is in the form of a cream, an ointment, a gel, a lotion, a solution, a pack, or a foundation.

BASIS FOR THE AMENDMENT

Claim 7 has been canceled. The limitations of Claim 7 have been included in Claim 4.

New Claims 15-17 have been added as supported by Claims 4 and 9, 6 and 10 as originally filed.

No new matter is believed to have been added by entry of this amendment. Entry and favorable reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Upon entry of this amendment Claims 1-6 and 8-17 will now be active in this application. Claims 1-3 and 5 stand withdrawn from further consideration as being drawn to non-elected subject matter.